



Using Selection Pressure as an Asset to Develop Reusable, Adaptable Software Systems

GSFC Earth Sciences (GES)
Data and Information Services Center (DISC)
http://disc.gsfc.nasa.gov

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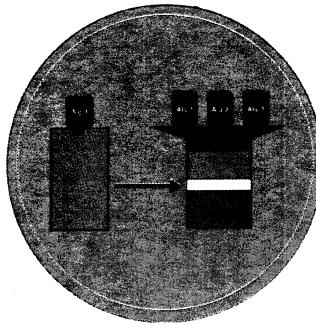
(NASA/GES DISC DAAC)

The Goddard Earth Sciences Data and Information Services Center (GES DISC) at NASA has over the years developed and honed several reusable architectural components for supporting large-scale data centers with a large customer base. These include a processing system (S4PM) and an archive system (S4PA) based upon a workflow engine called the Simple, Scalable, Script-based Science Processor (S4P); and an online data visualization and analysis system (Giovanni). These subsystems are currently reused internally in a variety of combinations to implement customized data management on behalf of instrument science teams and other science investigators. Some of these subsystems (S4P and S4PM) have also been reused by other data centers for operational science processing.

Our experience has been that development and utilization of robust, interoperable, and reusable software systems can actually flourish in environments defined by heterogeneous commodity hardware systems, the emphasis on value-added customer service, and the continual goal for achieving higher cost efficiencies. The repeated internal reuse that is fostered by such an environment encourages and even forces changes to the software that make it more reusable and adaptable. Allowing and even encouraging such selective pressures to software development has been a key factor in the success of S4P and S4PM, which are now available to the open source community under the NASA Open Source Agreement.

S4PM

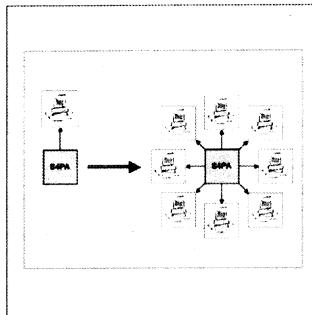
The Simple, Scalable, Script-based, Science Processor for Measurements (S4PM) was a processing system conceived and developed in 2001 to support the processing of data from MODIS¹ in the GES DISC. Built upon the proven S4P² core, S4PM developers quickly developed a capable processing system optimized to support MODIS algorithms and meet the reprocessing schedule. In 2002, S4PM was enhanced to process data from the Atmospheric Infrared Sounder. The influx of new, instrument-unique requirements forced an S4PM refactoring toward a more modular architecture, particularly at the interfaces where algorithms are plugged in. A subsequent requirement to support multiple platforms (Sun, SGI, Linux) provided the impetus to enhance portability. And the need for S4PM to be installed, deployed, and configured quickly by multiple users resulted in better packaging and more automated configuration. This led to public release of S4PM under the NASA Open Source Agreement in 2004. S4PM was then reused by Langley Research Center to process data from CALIPSO³, MISR⁴, and FLASHFlux⁵, and by EROS Data Center to process ASTER⁶ data.



¹MODIS: Moderate Imaging Spectroradiometer, ²Simple, Scalable, Script-based, Science Processor, ³Cloud-Aerosol Lidar and Infrared Pathfinder Satellite, ⁴Microwave Imaging Spectrometer, ⁵Fast Langley and Showers Radiative Fluxes, ⁶Advanced Spaceborne Thermal Emission and Reflection Radiometer

S4PA

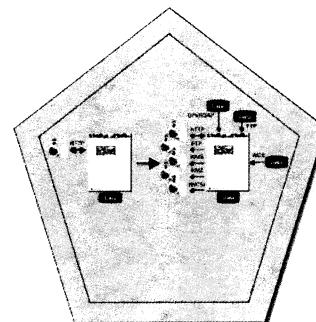
The Simple, Scalable, Script-based, Science Product Archive (S4PA) was designed to handle the migration of legacy data from robotic tape archives to disk. Beginning in 2006, S4PA was tapped to replace the massive EOSDIS¹ Core System (ECS) data archive with a hard deadline at the end of 2007. The schedule pressure to stand up multiple disk-based instances of S4PA to accommodate the vast data volume (~400 TB), each with its own integration engineer, drove the development of more sophisticated packaging and easier, more automated installation mechanisms.



¹Earth Observing System Data and Information System

Giovanni

Giovanni¹ is an online data visualization and analysis system that started out in 2002 as a Web-based CGI² application. It provided an interactive session via HTTP through which users could select data parameters, regions of interest and time ranges and generate a variety of plots and images. Data supporting Giovanni were on the machine hosting it and could be downloaded by the user via FTP. As Giovanni grew in popularity, science users provided feedback, which drove enhancements which, in turn, expanded Giovanni's popularity. Scientists seeking collaborations and interoperability with their systems followed. In 2005, Giovanni was then refactored from a CGI-based application to a services oriented architecture supported by a asynchronous workflow management system. Data no longer had to be on the host machine and could access remote data using an expanding list of protocols as well as multiple output protocols and data formats.



¹Goddard Interactive Online Visualization And Analysis Infrastructure, ²Common Gateway Interface

The Earth Science Data Systems Reuse Working Group has developed a DRAFT description of Reuse Readiness Levels (RRL), a metric for evaluating the reuse readiness of software. The top table below shows how S4PM, S4PA, and Giovanni progressed to higher RRLs over time in each category. The bottom table indicates which selection pressures were the most dominant in that process.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Packaging									
Portability	The software is not portable at any cost	Some parts of the software may be portable	Portable only with significant costs		Moderately portable	The software is portable	The software is highly portable		The software is completely portable
Documentation		Fully commented source code available		Reference manual available	User manual available	Tutorials available		Extension guide available	Full software lifecycle engineering design available
Support	No support available		Original developers provide proactive support		Informal user community available	Centralized support available	Organized/defined support by the original developer available	Support by organization available	Large user community with well-defined support available
Extensibility	No ability to extend or modify behavior		Can be extended with the input of considerable time and effort on par with recreating the system separately		Consideration for future extensibility is designed into the system	Designed from start for easy extensibility		Proven extensibility on a major external program, clear plan for extending	Proven extensibility in multiple scenarios with documentation
Intellectual Property (IP)	Potential owners and stakeholders identified	Relevant IP policies of potential owners and stakeholders reviewed	IP agreements proposed to potential stakeholders	IP agreements and authorship issues negotiated	Authorship, attribution and intellectual property issues agreement and approval	Authorship, attribution and intellectual property issues agreement and approval	Authorship and IP statements included in product prototype	Manifestation of authorship, attribution and IP statements reviewed	Proven by validation to comply with a "gold" standard
Standards Compliance	No particular standard		Follows a company-wide standard for development and testing	Most components follow a complete, universal standard, but not validated	All components follow a specific proprietary standard	Validated to follow a specific standard		Validated to comply with a "gold" standard	"Gold" standard compliance of entire system and development, independently validated
Verification and Testing	No testing performed	Software formulated and unit testing performed		Software tested and validated in laboratory environment	Software demonstrated in laboratory environment	Software demonstrated in a relevant environment	Software tested and validated in a laboratory environment	Software "qualified" through test and demonstration	Software application tested and demonstrated with successful use of output
Modularity					Partial segregation of generic and specific functionality		Clear delineations of specific and reusable components		All functions and data encapsulated into objects or accessible through Web services

	Platform Heterogeneity	Target Environment Heterogeneity	Cost Efficiency	Feature Growth
Packaging				
Portability				
Documentation				
Support				
Extensibility				
Intellectual Property Issues				
Standards Compliance				
Verification and Testing				
Modularity				